

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 VIENNA 00537 211746Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00
NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 ACDA-07
TRSE-00 SAJ-01 ERDA-05 OMB-01 IGA-02 AID-05 EB-08
MC-02 NEA-10 NRC-05 /104 W
-----220218Z 130465 /70

R 211633Z JAN 77
FM AMEMBASSY VIENNA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0579
INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
USMISSION USNATO
SECDEF WASHDC
DIA WASHDC
CINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENNA 0537

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, MPOL, UR, AU
SUBJ: PROSPECTS FOR DEFENSE MINISTER'S OUSTER INCREASED RE ARMS
SALES SCANDAL

REF: VIENNA 0356

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: LATEST MEDIA REVELATIONS OF DEFENSE
MINISTER LUETGENDORF'S PERSONAL CONNECTION WITH WHAT NOW
APPEARS TO BE PATTERN OF QUESTIONABLE AUSTRIAN ARMS SALES
INTO CONFLICT AREAS HAVE INCREASED PROSPECTS OF HIS EARLY
OUSTER FROM GOA. ARMS SALES SCANDAL TO BE DEBATED AT SPECIAL
PARLIAMENTARY SESSION NEXT WEEK AT WHICH OPPOSITION
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 VIENNA 00537 211746Z

PARTIES PLAN NO-CONFIDENCE MOTION. MOST SOCIALISTS NOW FEEL
LUETGENDORF MUST GO AND PARTY LEADERSHIP TRYING DEVELOP
SCENARIO TO HANDLE SITUATION.

2. JANUARY 18 MEETINGS OF DEFENSE AND FOREIGN POLICY
COUNCILS PROVED INCONCLUSIVE AS CHANCELLOR STATED REPORT
SUBMITTED BY DEFENSE MINISTRY WAS INCOMPLETE AND FURTHER

INVESTIGATIONS ON ARMS SALE SCANDAL AND DEFENSE MINISTER'S RELATION THERETO WOULD BE NECESSARY. IN MEANTIME, DAILY NEW REVELATIONS BY MEDIA CONCERNING WHAT SEEM TO BE QUESTIONABLE JUDGMENT AND OFFICIAL IMPROPRIETIES BY LUETGENDORF IN CONNECTION WITH ARMS SALES, AND SEEMINGLY AT VARIANCE WITH AUSTRIA'S NEUTRALITY POLICY, HAVE PRETTY MUCH DESTROYED LUETGENDORF'S POLITICAL VIABILITY AND UTILITY TO GOA. ACCORDINGLY, GENERAL CONSENSUS OUTSIDE OF SOCIALIST LEADERSHIP IS THAT SOLE REMAINING ACT FOR GOA IS TO PUT TOGETHER SCENARIO TO PROVIDE FOR QUICK END TO SCANDAL AND REPLACEMENT OF DEFENSE MINISTER.

3. MOST RECENT MEDIA REPORTING ON AUSTRIAN ARMS TRANSACTIONS INDICATE THAT EARLIER SHIPMENTS AMOUNTING TO THOUSANDS OF SHARP-SHOOTER (FOR HUNTING) RIFLES AND SIZEABLE QUANTITIES OF AMMO HAD BEEN SHIPPED BY ARMS DEALER WEICHSELBAUMER TO SYRIA, THIS WAS DONE THROUGH INTERCESSION OF DEFENSE MINISTRY TO AVOID INTER-MINISTRY CLEARANCES, ACCORDING TO MFA REPORTS OUT OF MIDDLE EAST. SINCE ARMS DEALER WEICHSELBAUMER ADMITTED SUCH WAS DONE FOR BENEFIT OF SYRIAN MILITARY SPORT ASSOCIATION, QUESTION OF CIRCUMVENTION OF AUSTRIAN PROCEDURES TO PRECLUDE SHIPMENTS OF ARMS INTO CONFLICT ZONE IS BEING RAISED BY MEDIA AND OPPOSITION. WEICHSELBAUMER'S STATEMENTS ON HIS DEALINGS WITH DEFENSE MINISTER AND PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP TO LUETGENDORF HAVE NOT HELPED LUETGENDORF'S PROSPECTS FOR CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 VIENNA 00537 211746Z

STAYING IN OFFICE.

4. OPPOSITION PARTIES CORRECTLY FEEL CONTROVERSY HAS DEVELOPED INTO MAJOR SCANDAL WITH POTENTIAL FOR PARTISAN POLITICAL GAIN. LARGER OPPOSITION PEOPLE'S PARTY HAS CALLED FOR SPECIAL PARLIAMENTARY SESSION MIDDLE NEXT WEEK TO DEBATE SCANDAL AND HAS ANNOUNCED IT WILL PUT MOTION OF NO-CONFIDENCE IN LUETGENDORF BEFORE PARLIAMENT IF HE IS STILL IN OFFICE AT THAT TIME. SMALLER OPPOSITION FREEDOM PARTY, GOING STEP FURTHER, HAS ANNOUNCED IT PLANS NO-CONFIDENCE MOTION AGAINST ENTIRE GOVERNMENT. SOCIALISTS HAVE IN TURN NOW MOBILIZED TOP PARTY AND PARLIAMENTARY LEADERSHIP TO TRY TO COPE WITH SPREADING POLITICAL FALLOUT OF SCANDAL. THEIR APPROACH AT THIS JUNCTURE SEEMS TO BE TO STILL KEEP ALL OPTIONS OPEN PUBLICLY BY CLAIMING THAT ONLY AFTER FULL INVESTIGATION CAN BALANCED JUDGMENT BE MADE ON FUTURE OF DEFENSE MINISTER BUT IF EVIDENCE IS NEGATIVE, APPROPRIATE

CONSEQUENCES WILL FOLLOW.

5. NOTEWORTHY IN LATTER CONNECTION IS STATEMENT BY
PARTY SECRETARY BLECHA, FOLLOWING JANUARY 20 SOCIALIST
PARTY EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING TO ASSESS SITUATION, THAT
KREISKY WOULD NOT ACCEPT IF OFFERED, RESIGNATION
BY LUETGENDORF UNTIL COMPLETION OF INVESTIGATION.
FOREGOING POLITICAL TACK SUGGESTS THAT DECISION TO
DROP LUETGENDORF MAY HAVE ALREADY BEEN TAKEN BUT THAT
DECISION WILL NOT BE MADE PUBLIC UNTIL APPROPRIATE
POLITICAL SCENARIO PREPARED.BUCHANAN

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, ARMS, CORRUPTION, ALLEGATIONS, PERSONNEL MOVEMENTS, MILITARY SALES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 21-Jan-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977VIENNA00537
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770023-0809
Format: TEL
From: VIENNA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770128/aaaaayfp.tel
Line Count: 127
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 8ec5b7d2-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 VIENNA 356
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 17-Nov-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3531108
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PROSPECTS FOR DEFENSE MINISTER'S OUSTER INCREASED RE ARMS SALES SCANDAL
TAGS: PFOR, MPOL, UR, AU, (LUETGENDORF, KARL FERDINAND)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/8ec5b7d2-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009